

PROPOSALS

For Employing the

Remaining Stock

OF THE

FISHERY,

So as to be of universal Use and
Advantage to the Nation,

In a LETTER from a Gentleman in
the Country, to his Friend at EDIN-
BURGH.



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SIR,

THE Accounts you wrote me some Weeks ago, of the general Conversation turning now on the Improbability of our Fishing Trade's succeeding, when managed by a Company, is what,

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you

you may remember, I, with Regrete suspected would be the Event of it a considerable Time since. I am very glad, however, to hear that the Proprietors are still so publick spirited, as to resolve, on Failure of the first Plan, not to draw their Money, but to imploy it on some other Project, either as an Addition to the Stock of the Society for propagating Christian Knowledge, or an Erection of a Linen Manufactory, or of an Hospital for Sick and wounded.

'Tis with no small Pleasure I have observed, That the principal Motive to all these different Proposals, is the good of the Country ; and indeed it must be acknowledged, our Countrymen have always been frank enough in their Endeavours to support any Scheme that carried a Probability with it, of either spiritual or temporal Advantage to the Nation; Tho' on Reflection, it may be observed, That such Societies as have been erected among us, for Christian, pious, or charitable Uses, have met with more Success, and have turned to better Account, than any Branch of Trade or Manufacture in a Company's Hands ; as is evident from the Funds allocated for Hospitals, to maintain old, and educate the Children of poor People : And the general Disposition to Charity is particularly displayed in that laudable Undertaking of propagating the Gospel in the

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Highlands and Islands of Scotland; which, as it is truly worthy of Christians, has been carried on with the desired Success, in so much, that the first Funds, tho' pretty considerable, have been greatly augmented by the repeated Contributions of our Country-men, by the late remarkable Bounty of His Majesty of One thousand Pound *Sterling per annum*, and by the unwearied Diligence and Fidelity of those, to whom the Management of the publick Stock was committed. So that this Society, with the Funds they are already Masters of, and the daily Increase of it by private Donations, seems now to be in a fair Way of fully answering the Design of its Institution, without further publick Assistance; and therefore, of the Proposals for employing what remains of the publick Stock, that of an Hospital for diseased People, seems to me the most useful, necessary, and likeliest to succeed.

I am, you know, no Physician, and may probably want the Arguments which those Gentlemen might advance in Behalf of this Design; But, as I have had Occasion to see something of the World, and have an Interest in the Company, I hope I may be allowed to deliver my Reasons for my Opinion. If you think they are of any Weight, I give you my Consent to shew them to any of our Fellow-sharers.

As

As Christians, we have the loudest Calls to Charity, and particularly to this Sort, which is every where in the New Testament, both by Example and Precept, pathetically inculcated, as one of the greatest Branches of our Duty. CHRIST himself exerts his miraculous Power in this charitable Office of healing Beggars, and those that sat by the Way-side. In that lively awful Representation our Saviour gives of the last Day, he rejects the Wicked, because they did not visit the Sick, feed the hungry, or clothe the Naked; and lays out the Neglect of this Duty as one of the greatest Offences done him, and the Performance of it as one of the sincerest Marks of our Love to him. Let us consider too what great Good may be done the Souls of many, who in the Agony of Pain, or Sorrow of Sickness, without Hopes of the Use of Means which others enjoy, may be tempted to curse the LORD and die. You see our cunning Adversary thought this a Season proper to overcome even the patient *Job*, after a great many other severe Trials had been ineffectual. Shall not we then have so much practical Christianity among us, as to endeavour, by parting with a small Moiety of our Effects, to follow the Example, and obey the Precepts of our blessed LORD and Saviour, and to rescue our Brethren from being exposed to such Temptations?

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If the least Spark of Humanity is in us, we cannot but be melted down with Compassion, when we see Numbers of our fellow rational Creatures, with trembling Joints and aching Limbs, dragging about a broken Constitution and diseased Carcase, endeavouring to purchase a very small Sustenance, for a weak enfeebled Body. And alas ! how many are there, who, when brought to this Condition, unheard of, pine away in some Corner, or drop down without a Cover, thro' want of either Food, or Medicines. Several of those miserable Wretches have not only the Infirmities of their own Persons to sustain, but are galled with the Thoughts of a starving Family at Home, which by their Inability, or on their Decease, must at best be left as Burdens on the Neighbourhood. Such is the Case of a great many, both Inhabitants of Burghs, and Counties. A very moving Instance of the Misery of poor sick People I had lately from a Member of your College of Physicians, (which Society have, by their Attendance on, and Advice to the Poor, with a yearly charitable Allowance for Drugs to such, proved themselves Physicians indeed, and worthy of all Commendation :) This Gentleman told me, that the poor Patients frequently came to their Apothecary, begging he would give them the Value of the Drugs allowed them in Money, to keep them from
starving

starving. Sure humane Nature cannot bear the faint Representation in Words of such a Scene, without wishing to be in a Condition to prevent the Reality of it. Now is an Opportunity offered to do the good Work, let us embrace it.

It is a Maxim universally received, That the Strength and Power of any Community depend upon its Riches and Numbers of Inhabitants. I imagine it would be no hard Matter to demonstrate, That an Hospital for sick and wounded, would encrease both in this Country ; for great Numbers of People labouring under long lingering Diseases, many of which allow sufficient Time to come from even the remotest Parts of the Nation ; such People, I say, who now are lost, or hindred to serve their Generation, might be saved, or cured, if due Assistance was given them. And, as scarce any go about begging, who either are not under some Infirmary of Body, or pretend to be so ; here would be a proper Place where their Maladies would be remedy'd, or Frauds detected : In both which Cases a great many working Hands might be recovered, to be employed to the good of Society, and easing the Country of a heavy Burden and Tax, which now is in a Manner imposed by sturdy hypocritical Beggars.

Then considerable Sums of Money, several Thousand Pounds, would be saved yearly to
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the Nation, which is expended on the foreign Education of our Youth, who apply themselves to Physick or Surgery. For from a great many good Hands I have had it, That the Schools of Medicine are now on such a Footing in *E. dinburgh*, that no Students need go Abroad to be educated, unless for the Opportunity of Hospitals, to learn the Practice in ; which Practice able Physicians have acknowledged to me, with seeming sufficient Reason, they were obliged, in a great Measure, to unlearn again, because of the different Treatment necessary to their Patients of opposite Constitutions in different Climates ; and at the same Time regretted, that in some of the most celebrated foreign Hospitals, either thro' the supine Negligence, or designed Obscurity of the Physicians and Surgeons, the most diligent could with Difficulty pick up any thing of a rational Experience. Now as we have their Constitutions and Method of Management to build upon, these Inconveniencies may be easily prevented, and consequently our Youth be much better and cheaper taught ; especially considering, they may probably live with, and be immediately under the Eye of their Relations, who will take Care that they shall not mispend their Time and Money, as those who go abroad have at least an Opportunity to do, and which young Folks are too much inclined to.

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Besides,

Besides, if such an Hospital was once put on a right Footing, our Country would be great Gainers by the Resort of Strangers, both to be cured and instructed. I am told that every Year the Schools of Physick have already brought to your University Numbers of *English* and *Irish* Students, who have not such Schools any where in their own Country. And in a little Time the Reputation of a *Scots* educated Physician or Surgeon would be such, that our young Gentlemen, who incline to follow their Business Abroad, would be sooner and better provided for in the Plantations, Sea or Land-Service; which cannot but be a View of Advantage to every Parent who has any Number of Sons to educate.

So far you see the immediate Concerns of the whole Nation are engaged. Besides which, the Inhabitants of *Edinburgh* will enjoy particular Benefits by the Erection of such an Hospital: Such as, Having the Profits arising from Strangers first in their Hands, tho' indeed it must soon be afterwards divided thro' the Country; Their Workmen and Labourers, who are liable to Accidents, are soon and well taken Care of, and proper Lodgings and Medicines are at hand to their Servants, when seized with any Disease. All *Europe*, except *Scotland*, is so sensible of the vast Advantage of such an Hospital for Sick and Wounded; that,
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not to mention the large Hospitals of *St. Thomas, Bartholomew, Hotel Dieu, and Charité* in those large populous Towns, *London* and *Paris*; there is ne'er a petty Town in *Holland, Germany, France* or *Italy*, but what have their *Lazarettoe's*. This Reflection makes me ashamed we have been so long from Copying after so good an Example.

Before I finish this long Epistle, which the thorow Conviction I bear of the good Effects such an Undertaking would have, has engaged me in; let me obviate a Difficulty I have heard some People make, *viz.* That the Undertaking is too great for the Fund; as if it was proposed at once to erect a *Hotel Dieu*, or *St. Thomas's*. This Proposal can by no Means be so understood: For no Nation would lay down a Scheme of such a vast Work, to be instantly compleated. But if once our Hospital had a handsome Foundation, no doubt, it would share the same Fate with those others, which by Donations have risen from small Beginnings to that prodigious greatness they now are of: Nay already, every one I converse with, frankly offers to contribute. For my own Part I'll willingly give up to that Use any small Share I have in the Fishery, and at the same Time chearfully lay out what else my Circumstances can allow, as you may be assured a great many more will.

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If the Proprietors of the Fishery-Company do agree to employ their Money to this Christian, charitable, and beneficial Use ; 'tis to be presumed that those Gentlemen who are acquainted with the Constitution and Government of such Hospitals elsewhere, will soon lay before the Society, or Committees that shall be appointed, the proper Method of erecting and managing this great and good Design.

I am of Opinion such a Scheme might be laid down for this Undertaking, as would convince every one, that their Money would be applied to the Purpose they designed it, to great Advantage, without one Shilling's being dilapidated, embezeled or mispent ; and at the same Time very little of the Fund be exhausted in fitting up a House, or in Fees and Salaries to the necessary Officers or Servants : And indeed I have been already at some Pains to form such a Plan, which shall be communicated to you, as soon as I can learn the good Impression these Reasons advanced for the Hospital, have made on any Number of my Countrymen, who either by their Consent to apply the Remainder of their Shares in the Fishery, or by contributing out of their Pockets, seem resolved to encourage such a Design. I am

Your Humble Servant.

November

1725.



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